



DARK NIGHTS

1

BATMAN

THE DROWNED

DARK NIGHTS
THE DROWNED
TIE-IN

Abnett
Tan
White



THE ONLY WORLD I'VE
EVER KNOWN SINKS
INTO THE DARKNESS
BELOW ME FOREVER.

AS DOES THE ONLY
LOVE I'VE EVER KNOWN.
BUT SYLVESTER DIED A
LONG TIME BEFORE MY
WORLD DID.

I FOUGHT HARD TO CLING
ON AND KEEP IT AFLOAT
AFTER SYLVESTER'S DEATH,
BUT IT COULDN'T BE SAVED.

IT'S TIME TO LET
GO. TO ACCEPT.

AND GO
UP...

...TOWARD
THE LIGHT.

THE MOCKING LIGHT.
THE DAMNED LIGHT.

THE
SURFACE.

PROTECTING MY WORLD
WAS AN OBSESSION
THAT CONSUMED ME.

BY THE END, IT WAS LIKE
TRYING TO TREAD WATER IN
THE NUMBING COLD WHEN
YOU'RE EXHAUSTED.

SPPSSSHHH

BETTER JUST
TO DROWN.

DROWN
IT ALL.

CRASH

THE LIGHT HURTS
MY EYES. I'M
NOT USED TO IT.

I HATE THE LIGHT.
IT'S TO BLAME
FOR EVERYTHING.

I USED TO THINK THAT
SYLVESTER HAD GONE
UP INTO THE LIGHT.

STUPID.

NAIVE.

MY LOVE ISN'T
HERE AND THIS ISN'T
A BETTER PLACE.

THE ONE WHO LAUGHS
TOLD ME THIS TOWN IS
CALLED AMNESTY BAY.

AMNESTY. A CLEAN
SLATE. A CHANCE
FOR A DO-OVER...

...A CHANCE TO
WASH IT ALL AWAY
AND START AGAIN.



MY WORLD WAS NEVER
A GOOD PLACE. IT WAS
BRUTAL AND CORRUPT.

MY WHOLE LIFE, I FOUGHT TO MAKE
IT BETTER--EVEN AFTER THE ROGUE
METAS TOOK SYLVESTER KYLE FROM ME.

I THOUGHT IT WAS
AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL.

BUT I WAS WASTING MY
TIME, BECAUSE MY WORLD
COULD NEVER BE REDEEMED.

I KNOW NOW MY EARTH
WAS A LOWER-TIER WORLD.
MALFORMED AND BROKEN.

ONE OF MANY
CURSED TO ROT
AND SINK.



BECAUSE OF
THE LIGHT. THE
LIGHT UP HERE.

NO WONDER I
COULDN'T SAVE IT
DESPITE ALL MY
SACRIFICES.

THE LIGHT IS WHERE
THINGS ARE GOOD
AND WHOLE. HERE,
LIFE PROSPERS.

AND IT PROSPERS AT THE
EXPENSE OF WORLDS IN
THE LOWER TIER--LIKE MINE.

WE DECAY
AND FALL SO
IT CAN LIVE.

WE SUFFER SO
IT CAN THRIVE.

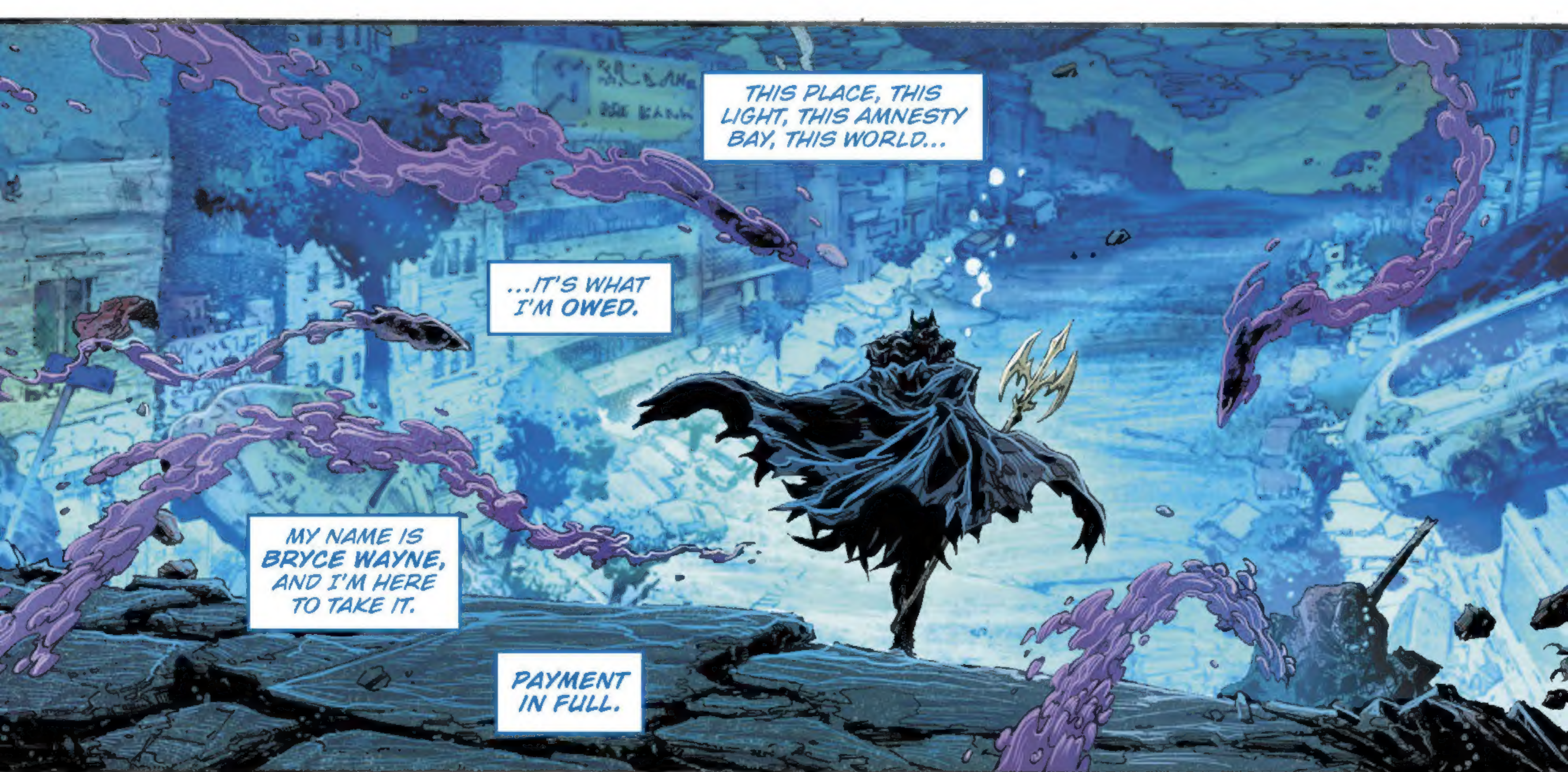


NOT ANY
MORE.

CALL THIS AN ACT OF
PIRACY. THE "HAVE-NOTS"
TAKING WHAT THEY NEED
FROM THE "HAVES."

THE
DISENFRANCHISED
SEEKING REDRESS.
A SEIZURE OF GOODS.
A RESTORATION OF
BALANCE.

CALL IT WHAT YOU
DAMN WELL LIKE.



THIS PLACE, THIS
LIGHT, THIS AMNESTY
BAY, THIS WORLD...

...IT'S WHAT
I'M OWED.

MY NAME IS
BRYCE WAYNE,
AND I'M HERE
TO TAKE IT.

PAYMENT
IN FULL.



OF COURSE,
THERE WILL BE
RESISTANCE...

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THE HELL YOU
ARE--

I EXPECTED THAT.

--BUT
THIS STOPS
NOW.

MERA--

RIGHT
BESIDE YOU,
ARTHUR.

TAKE THIS
MONSTER
DOWN!

These are the stories from
the Dark Multiverse that
should NEVER be...

...Witness the rise of
the Dark Knights...

BATMAN THE DROWNED

in *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

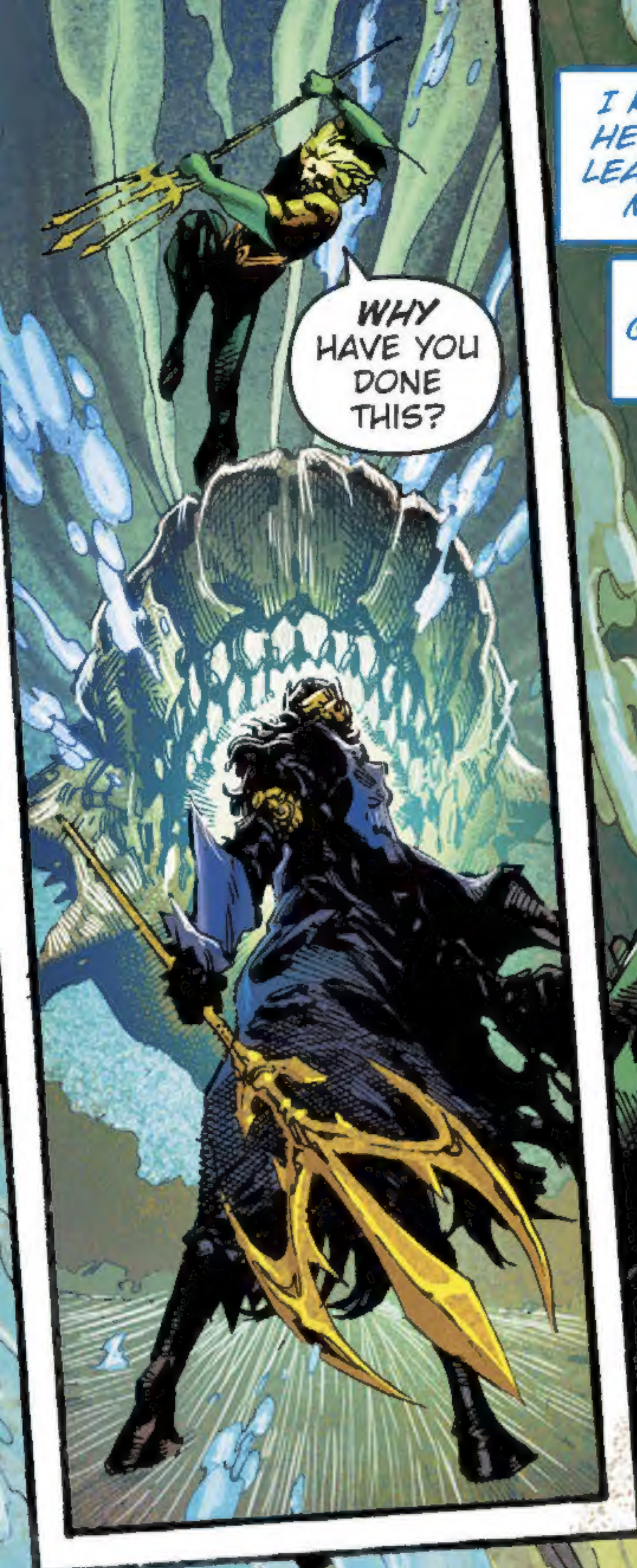
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SPECIAL THANKS TO SCOTT SNYDER, GREG CAPULLO AND JAMES TYNION IV

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER



WHY
HAVE YOU
DONE
THIS?

I KNOW WHO
HE IS...OR AT
LEAST WHO HE
MUST BE.

AN AQUAMAN.
GENDER ROLES ARE
REVERSED HERE.



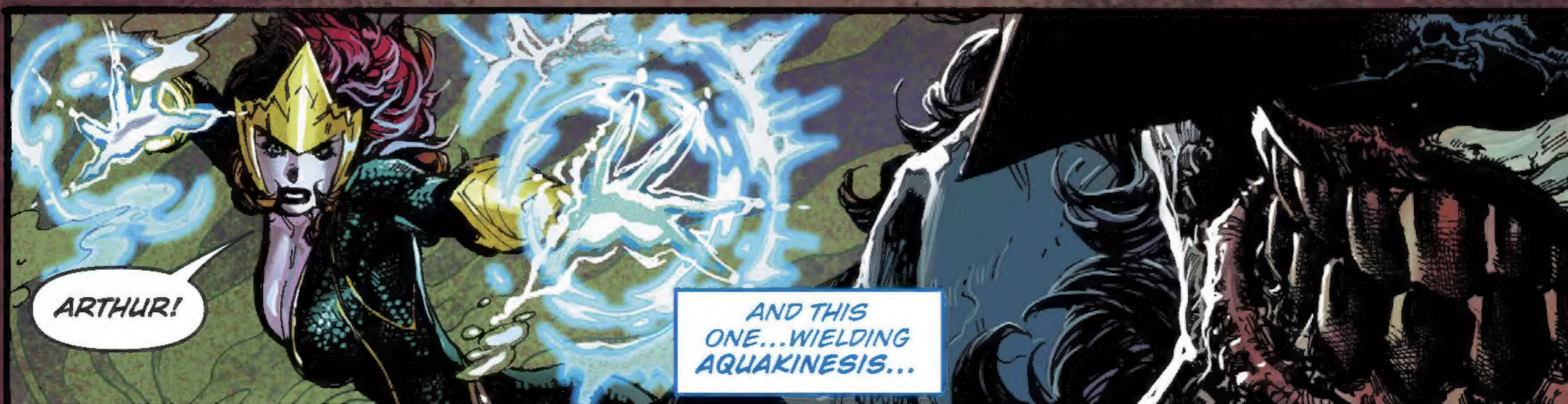
BUT HE
IS SLOW...



WHAT?



...AND
WEAK.



ARTHUR!

AND THIS
ONE...WIELDING
AQUAKINESIS...



...FUTILE.

THE WATER...
D-DOES NOT
OBEY ME...



UGHNN!

MY
WATER. MY
RULES.

HE COMES
FOR ME AGAIN.

HE'S NOT
HOLDING BACK.



THAT'S
FINE.

I'VE FOUGHT AND
KILLED PLENTY OF
ATLANTEANS BEFORE...

EARTH-11

...SINCE THEY
FIRST APPEARED
ON MY WORLD,
YEARS AGO.

IT WAS EIGHTEEN
MONTHS AFTER
I'D HUNTED DOWN
THE LAST OF THE
ROGUE METAS AND
AVENGED SYLVESTER.

I THOUGHT I'D
FINALLY MADE MY
WORLD SAFE.

BUT NO, HERE THEY
WERE, LED BY THEIR QUEEN--
AQUAWOMAN--EMERGING
FROM THE SECRET PLACES
OF THE SEA AFTER YEARS
OF SELF-IMPOSED EXILE.

CLAIMING THEY
CAME IN PEACE.

BUT I
KNEW
BETTER.

JUST MORE ROGUE
METAS. A THREAT THAT
MENACES EVERYTHING
WE HELD DEAR.

I COULD FEEL
IT IN MY GUT.

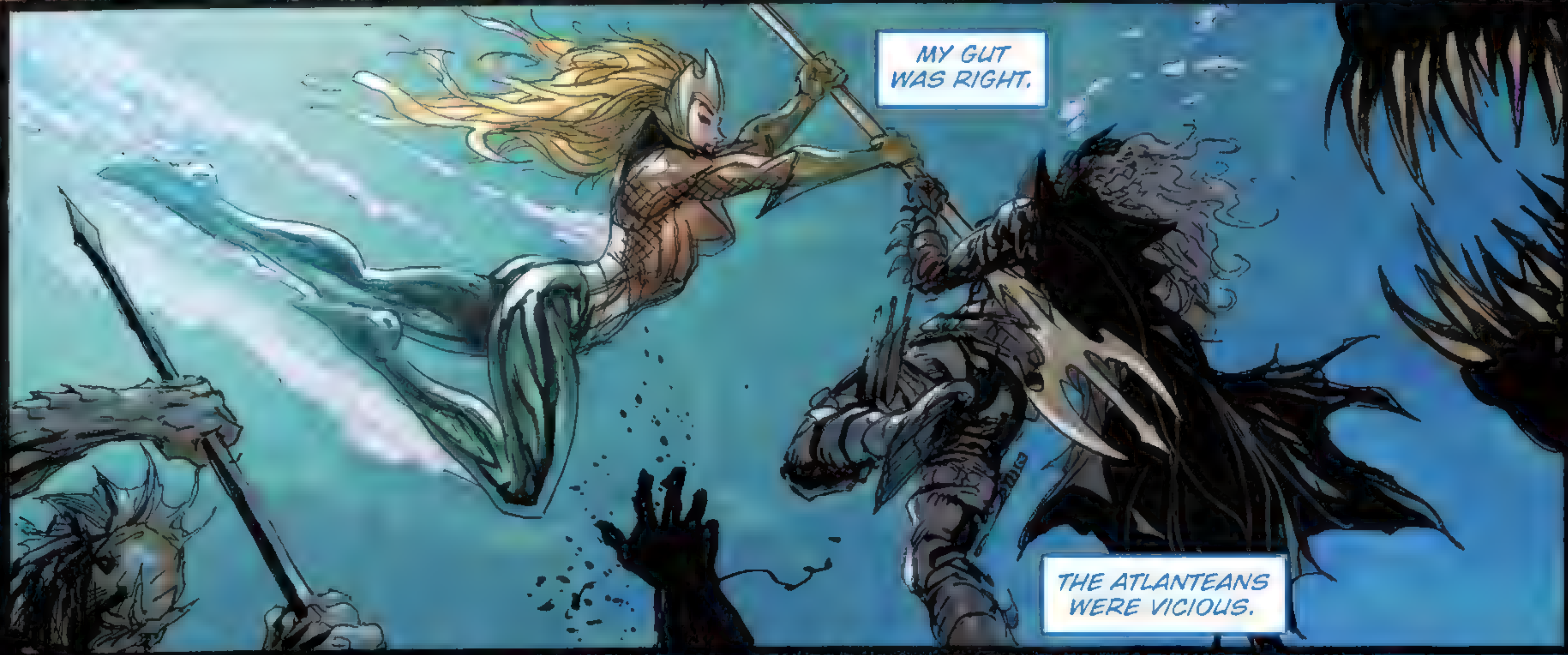
I DON'T TRUST
ANYONE, BUT I TRUST
MY GUT INSTINCT.

LIKE I TRUST MY ABILITY TO
PROTECT THE INNOCENT.



I HAD NO FAITH IN THE ATLANTEANS' EFFORTS TO SUE FOR PEACE.

SURE ENOUGH, THE "PEACE TALKS" COLLAPSED IN VIOLENCE.



MY GUT WAS RIGHT.

THE ATLANTEANS WERE VICIOUS.



UNTRUSTWORTHY INVADERS. THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL ARE.

SO I REDEFINED
VICIOUS FOR THEM.

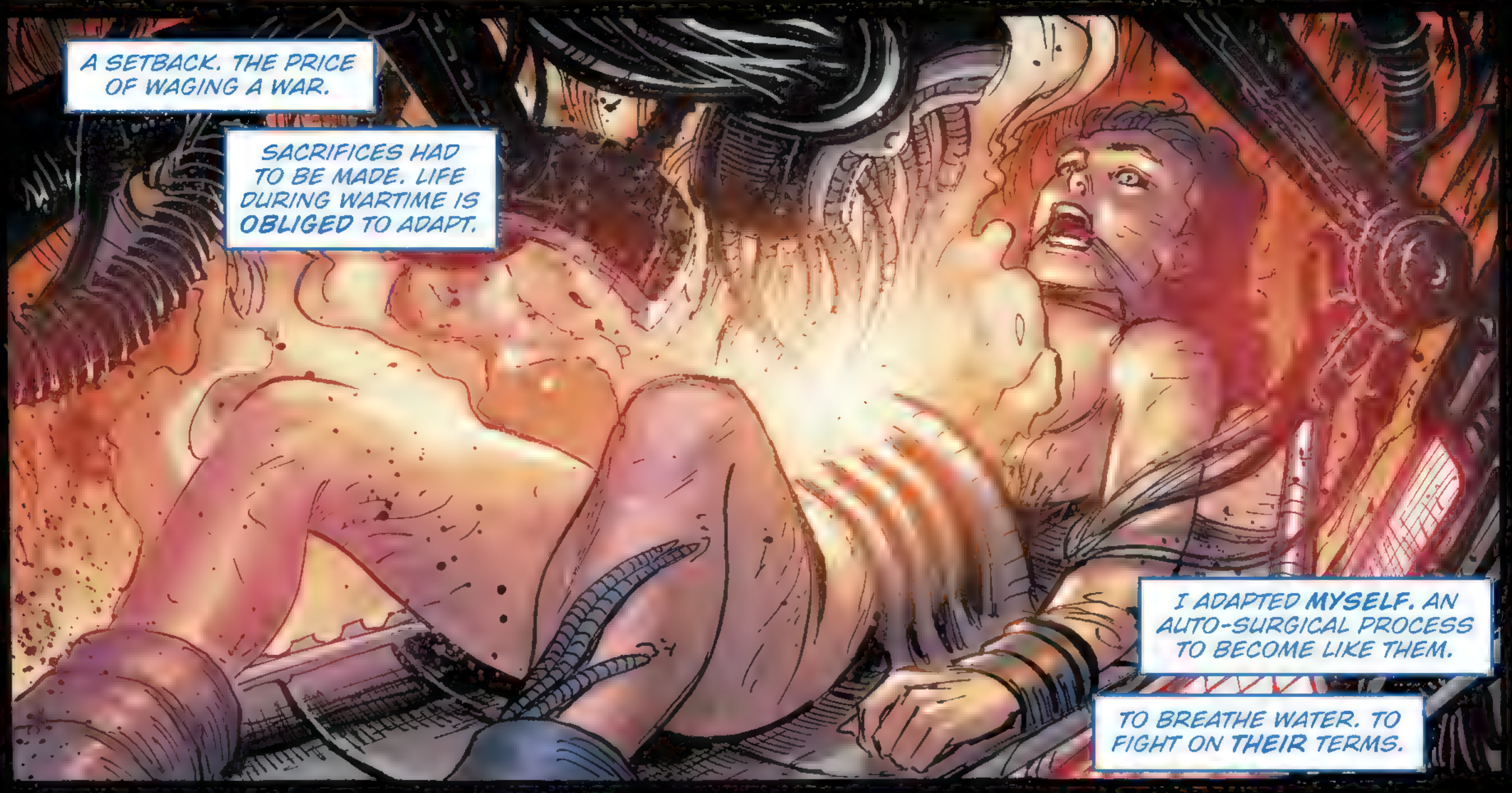




I HAD HOPED
THEY WOULD GET
THE MESSAGE.

THEY DID
NOT.

THEIR RETALIATION
DROWNED GOTHAM.

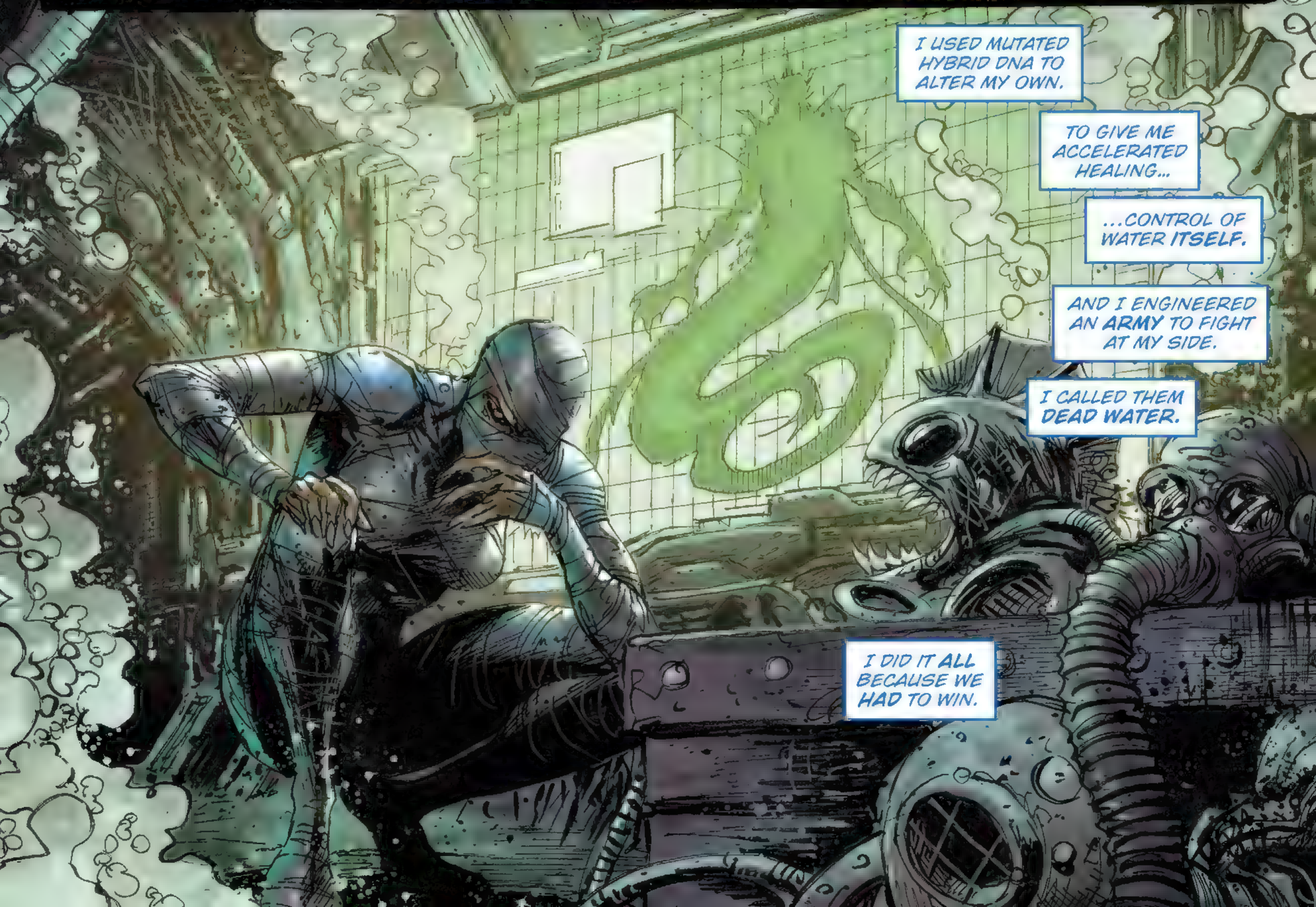


A SETBACK. THE PRICE
OF WAGING A WAR.

SACRIFICES HAD
TO BE MADE. LIFE
DURING WARTIME IS
OBLIGED TO ADAPT.

I ADAPTED MYSELF. AN
AUTO-SURGICAL PROCESS
TO BECOME LIKE THEM.

TO BREATHE WATER. TO
FIGHT ON THEIR TERMS.



I USED MUTATED
HYBRID DNA TO
ALTER MY OWN.

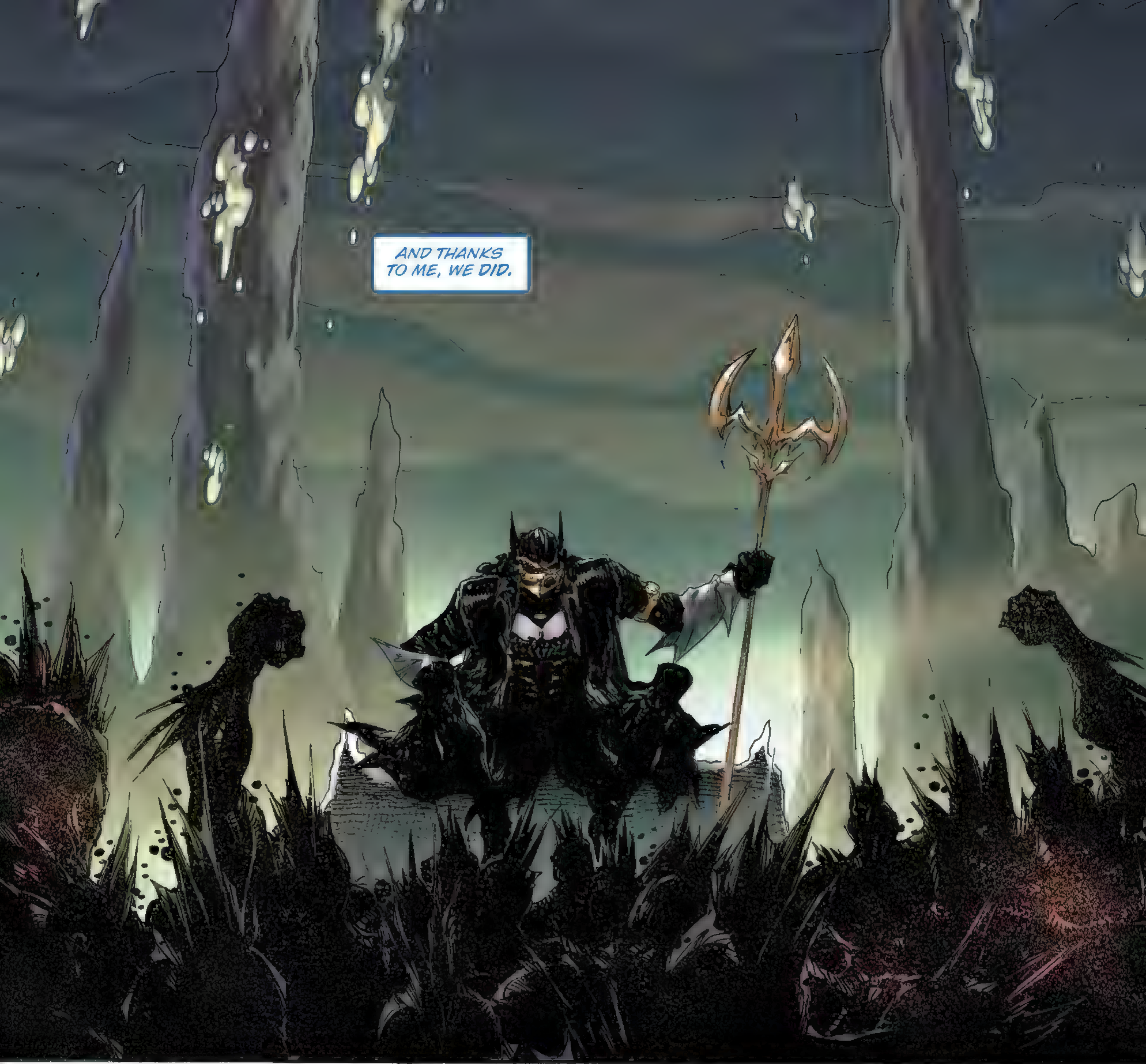
TO GIVE ME
ACCELERATED
HEALING...

...CONTROL OF
WATER ITSELF.

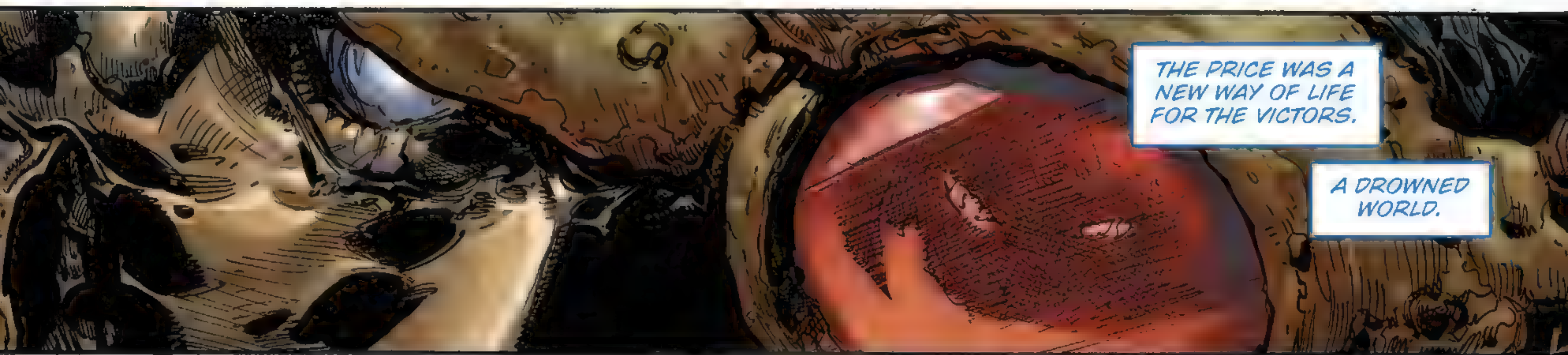
AND I ENGINEERED
AN ARMY TO FIGHT
AT MY SIDE.

I CALLED THEM
DEAD WATER.

I DID IT ALL
BECAUSE WE
HAD TO WIN.



AND THANKS
TO ME, WE DID.



THE PRICE WAS A
NEW WAY OF LIFE
FOR THE VICTORS.

A DROWNED
WORLD.



SO I LIT A LAMP TO
SHINE OUT ACROSS THE
DARKNESS OF THE DEEP.

A LIGHT TO
SIGNAL HOPE
AND VICTORY.

THE ONLY
LIGHT LEFT IN
THE WORLD.



THEN, ONE
NIGHT, THE
SIGNAL FELL
DARK.

I WENT TO REPAIR
IT, AND HE WAS
WAITING FOR ME...

...THE ONE
WHO LAUGHS.



YOU
DON'T TRUST
ANYTHING,
DO YOU,
BRYCE?

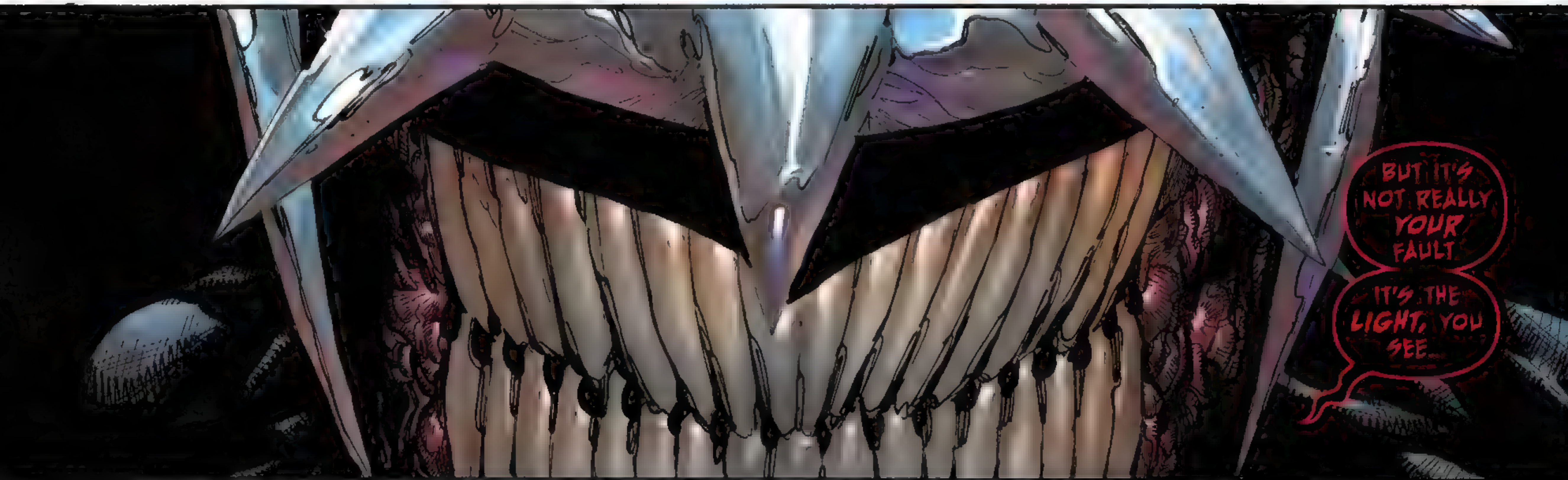
NOTHING
AT ALL.

AND THIS
WORLD IS DONE
BECAUSE OF
IT.

HE WAS
RIGHT, I NEVER
TRUST ANYTHING
OR ANYONE.


BUT I
TRUSTED
HIM.

THERE WAS
SOMETHING IN HIS
VOICE. SOMETHING
FAMILIAR AND
REASSURING.



BUT IT'S
NOT REALLY
YOUR
FAULT.

IT'S THE
LIGHT, YOU
SEE.



THE
LIGHT UP
THERE.

AND HE
SHOWED IT
TO ME.

HE SHOWED ME THE
LOWER-TIER WORLDS. THE
MINUS REALMS OF THE
DARK MULTIVERSE THAT
HAD SUFFERED SO THAT
THE LIGHT COULD THRIVE.

THE WORLDS AND THE
PEOPLES THAT HAD PAID
THE PRICE SO THAT THE
WORLDS ABOVE US
COULD FLOURISH.

AND HE
SHOWED ME
THE OTHERS
LIKE ME.

OUTCAST ITERATIONS.
DARK ECHOES OF A MAN
WHO HAD TAKEN IT ALL.

AND HE
LAUGHED.

"YOU SEE
THE LIGHT UP
THERE? RIGHT
UP THERE...?"

IT
MOCKS US
ALL.

IT'S
AN UNSULLIED
MULTIVERSE WHERE
ALL IS BRIGHT AND
ASCENDANT.

IT'S WHY
WE SUFFER. IT'S
WHY NOTHING CAN
EVER BE MADE
RIGHT.

THAT
WORLD IS THE
PERFECTION
YOU DREAM
OF.

YOU ARE ITS
NIGHTMARE.

"THINK OF
DROWNING," HE
SAID. "IT'S ACTIVE
AND PASSIVE.

"DON'T BE THE VICTIM
WHO DROWNS. DON'T
SINK WITH THE REST.

"BE ACTIVE. RISE UP...
RECLAIM THE LIGHT...

"...AND BE THE
ONE WHO DOES
THE DROWNING."

EARTH-0.

THAT'S WHY
I'M HERE.

ARTHUR,
WHAT IS
SHE?

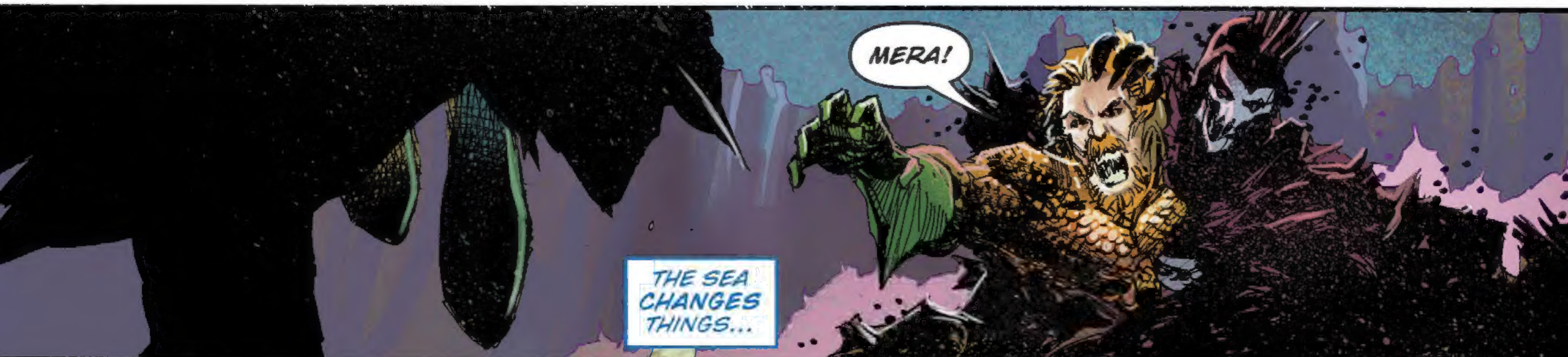
HOW DO
WE STOP
HER--?

MERA,
BEWARE--!



MY WATER.
MY RULES.

I OPEN A CONDUIT AND
BRING MY ARMY INTO THE
LIGHT TO FIGHT AT MY SIDE.



...YOU CAN'T
STOP IT.

MERGE WITH THE
DEAD WATER...

...SUCCUMB TO
THE INEVITABLE.

THAT'S HOW I
MADE MY ARMY.
THROUGH THE
TRANSMUTING
POWER OF THE
SEA.

TO TURN
THE TIDE OF
LOYALTY.

TO DROWN
OPPOSITION.

TO MAKE EVEN THE
MOST RESISTANT
FIGHT FOR ME.

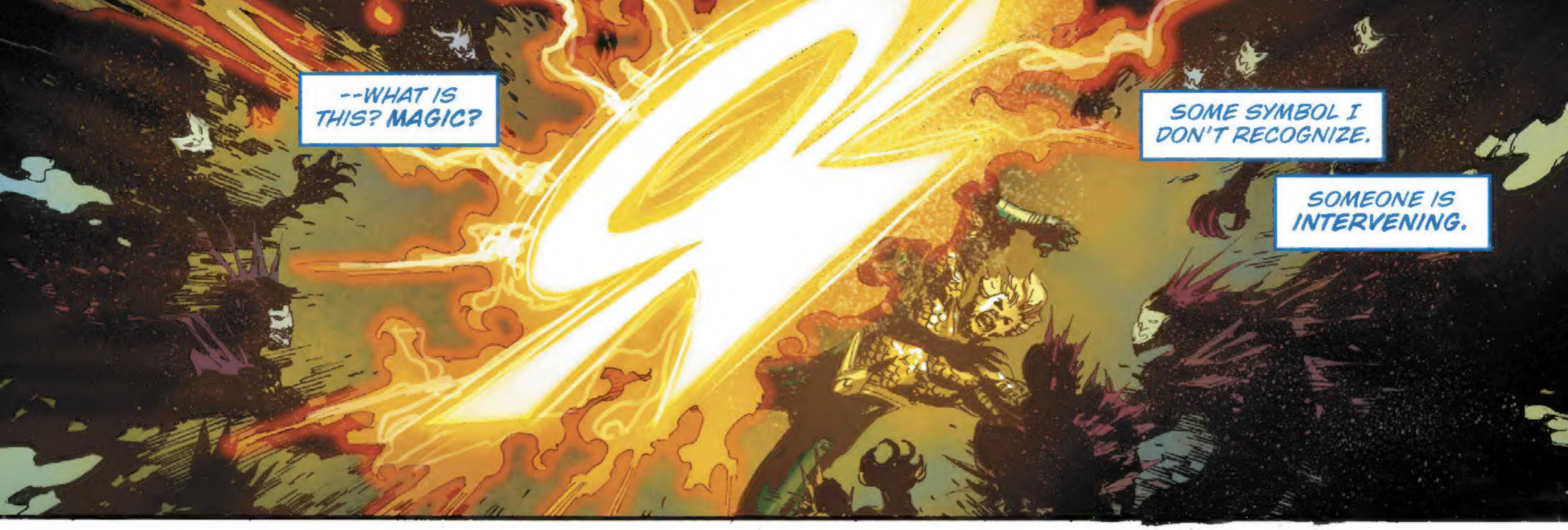
NERA!

HE SCREAMS IN
DESPAIR. I KNOW THAT
FEELING. TO LOSE THE
PERSON YOU LOVE.

HE IS GOING TO BE DEAD
IN ANOTHER SECOND, AND
THE PAIN WILL CEASE.

HOW FORTUNATE. I WISH
I HAD DIED A FEW SECONDS
AFTER SYLVESTER, SO I COULD
HAVE BEEN SPARED THE--

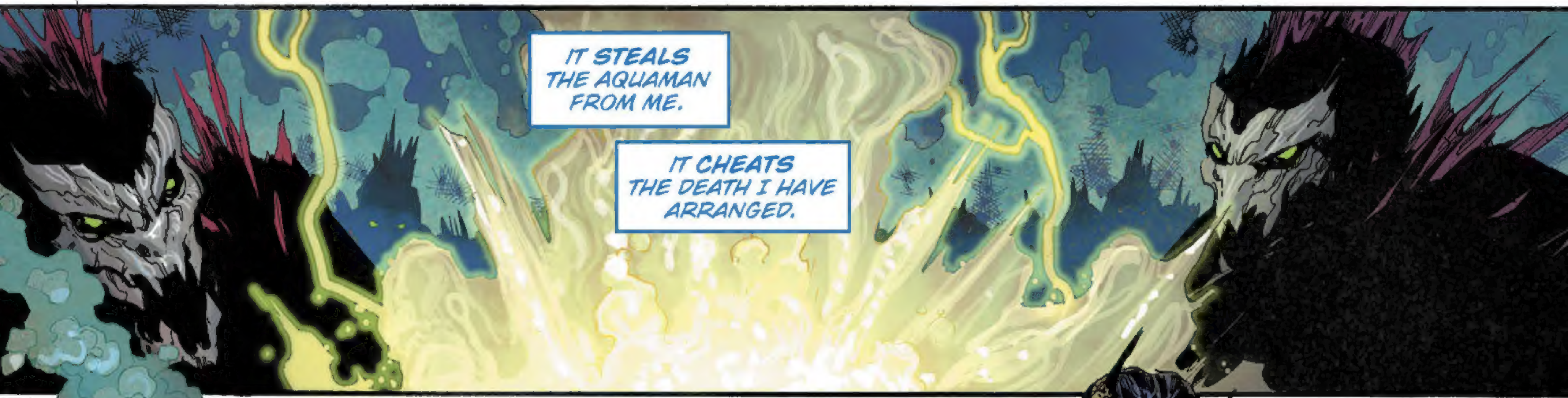
WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE TO
HER? WHAT
HAVE YOU
DONE?



--WHAT IS THIS? MAGIC?

SOME SYMBOL I DON'T RECOGNIZE.

SOMEONE IS INTERVENING.



IT STEALS THE AQUAMAN FROM ME.

IT CHEATS THE DEATH I HAVE ARRANGED.

I WONDER WHERE IT'S TAKEN HIM.

MY SOLACE...HE'S ALIVE, AND WHEREVER HE'S GONE, HE'LL GET TO LIVE THAT PAIN.

UNTIL I FIND HIM AGAIN.





MY AMNESTY
BEGINS HERE.

I LIGHT
MY SIGNAL.

MY LIGHT...TO
SHOW THIS WORLD
MY INTENT...

...I'M GOING TO
DROWN IT ALL.

THIS
WHOLE
WORLD.



TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT WEEK IN

BATMAN
THE MERCILESS

TRUST ME
ON THAT.